



OASIS OF THE SEAS

THE ARCHITECTS AND DESIGNERS: A COLLABORATION OF THE GREATEST CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE MINDS

Miami – Imagine designing an entire small city, all at once. Then imagine that city not only has to float, but to cruise at upward of 20 knots and provide an enriching vacation experience for more than 5,400 guests every single week. That was the challenge Royal Caribbean International faced when it began planning *Oasis of the Seas*, the world’s largest and most innovative cruise ship. Six years later, the completed vessel represents the work of the largest creative team ever assembled to bring a single cruise ship to life: no fewer than 37 design firms, 20 architectural firms, the 130 members of Royal Caribbean’s Newbuilding & Fleet Design group and an equally large staff of architects and engineers from STX Europe’s shipyard in Turku, Finland.

“It was a humongous project,” says Harri Kulovaara, executive vice president, Maritime, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., whose group oversaw *Oasis of the Seas*’ journey from idea to reality. “A ship like this requires nine to ten million working hours for design and construction, involving the best skills in the world, the most innovative minds and the best technology, and creating a tremendous team effort around that.”

It was a process that zeroed in on the very best ideas and, through collaboration and an intense focus on innovation, took them further than anyone could have imagined. Beginning in 2003, Royal Caribbean’s Newbuilding group began working with the shipyard’s naval architecture group, and for the next two years, acted as the linchpins of a steering committee that also included senior Royal Caribbean leadership, operations and marketing executives, and a number of architect vendors. All told, this group developed and evaluated more than 15 general configurations for what was then known as “Project Genesis,” gradually honing the design into what became *Oasis of the Seas*. Revolutionary concepts like the vessel’s “neighborhoods” concept and unprecedented split-superstructure design both grew from ideas that had germinated on earlier Royal Caribbean vessels, and led to further innovation as designers began brainstorming on the possibilities they offered.

“It’s very much an iterative process, and evolutionary,” says Richard D. Fain, Chairman and CEO, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. “You learn from doing it on other ships, and each time you learn more, and you use that.”

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As the design process matured, Royal Caribbean brought in many of the world's leading architecture and design firms, specialists in such areas as restaurant and nightclub design, theaters and entertainment venues, hotel design, landscape architecture, lighting, graphic design, art, and even the manufacture of classic carnival carousels. Proposals from competing firms were evaluated to choose the best ideas for critical spaces like Central Park, Boardwalk and the Royal Promenade. At intensive multi-day sessions, designers would present their ideas to the steering committee and their fellow architects and designers, and everyone was encouraged to share their comments and suggestions as a way of ensuring that all aspects of *Oasis of the Seas*' design – from big concept spaces like Central Park to small details such as elevator button panels – were orchestrated to create an overall look and feel.

“The design team has really worked to make sure everything harmonizes, but there's also a lot of serendipity here,” added Fain. “One of the problems with, say, planned communities is that it's all plain vanilla. What makes *Oasis of the Seas* special is how well quite disparate elements fit together. Almost anywhere you go on this ship, you're going to see places of wonder, where you turn a corner and you're surprised, because you never expected to see what you're seeing.”

The A-list design and architecture firms that contributed their talents to *Oasis of the Seas* included:

Atkins Global (London, UK)

Atkins is a multidisciplinary architectural and design consultancy with 18,000 creative staff in more than 200 offices worldwide, serving the needs of clients from sketch to reality. Under the leadership of Tom Wright, Kevin Johnson and Kate Lockey, an Atkins Global team created much of the design for the Royal Promenade, Boardwalk, Central Park, and the Rising Tide Bar, the first moving bar at sea that travels elevator-like between the Royal Promenade and Central Park. Another Atkins contribution – two huge, arched glass skylights known as the Crystal Canopies – also allows natural light filter down from park to promenade.

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Arkitektbyrå AB (Gothenburg, Sweden)

Arkitektbyrå AB's work includes a wide array of architectural design involving residential blocks, office buildings, city planning, stadiums and shipbuilding. A Royal Caribbean design partner since 1995's *Legend of the Seas*, for which Lars Iwdal and Jan Akerblad created the first mini-golf course on the open decks, Arkitektbyrå has been instrumental in creating all of the open decks for *Oasis of the Seas*, including the Solarium and Solarium Bistro, Main Pool, Beach Pool, H2O Zone, Sports Pool, Sports Court, FlowRider and zip line. They were also responsible for designing the Youth Zone kids and teens center.

BG Studio International (New York, USA)

A worldwide leader in creating signature hospitality, luxury commercial and intimate residential interiors, BG Studio is also internationally recognized for its award-winning cruise ship and maritime interiors. For *Oasis of the Seas*, BG Studio founders and partners Francesca Bucci and Hans J. Galutera brought their unique design savvy and savoir-faire to the Jazz on 4 music lounge, the Comedy Live club, and 150 Central Park, the ship's signature fine-dining restaurant.

Carousel Works (Ohio, USA)

Carousel Works is the world's largest manufacturer of hand-carved wooden carousels, bringing back the lights, music and magic of the classic carnival carousel one city – and one cruise ship – at a time. From design to installation, Carousel Works takes pride in providing each customer with the utmost quality of craftsmanship, the unique aesthetics of its experienced artisans, and the dream-like quality of its wooden and brass carousels, each of which is hand-crafted as a truly original design, touching the hearts of all ages.

Gensler (Chicago and New York, USA)

Gensler is a global architecture, design and planning firm with more than 2,100 professionals in 32 offices in Asia, the UK, the Americas and the Middle East, delivering projects as large as a city and as small as a task light. For *Oasis of the Seas*, Gensler has brought its specialized design experience to all the ship's retail and shopping venues, including Boardwalk's Candy Beach, Star Pier teen shop, and Pinwheels kids' shop; Royal Promenade's Prince & Greene and Regalia boutiques and Focus photo shop; the Pool Deck's Breeze sundry shop; and Central Park's portrait studio, Picture This.

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Morris Nathanson Design, Inc. (Rhode Island, USA)

Established in 1967, Morris Nathanson Design, Inc is a full-service interior design firm renowned for its work in the restaurant and hospitality industries. For more than 40 years, founder Morris Nathanson, ASID, has personally guided what is now a family-run business, along with his son, Josh, and daughter, Kim. Some of the firm's signature spaces aboard *Oasis of the Seas*, created under the leadership of designer Elizabeth Slader, include the Royal Promenade's Globe and Atlas Pub, Sorrento's Pizzeria and Café Promenade; Boardwalk's Seafood Shack and Boardwalk Donut Shop; and Central Park's Vintages wine bar and Park Café.

NB&D (Miami, USA)

Established in the late 1990s, the creative division of the Newbuilding & Fleet Design (NB&D) group is Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.'s in-house team of approximately thirty designers, who work to develop innovative concepts and designs for both newbuilds and revitalized ships, and to ensure their implementation while maintaining a consistent brand quality throughout the fleet. Under the oversight of Design Manager Christopher Love, the team's charge for *Oasis of the Seas* included designing the Loft Suites, Viking Crown Lounge, Pinnacle Chapel and Lounge, Boleros Latin bar, the Schooner Bar, the Champagne Bar, Giovanni's Table, Cupcake Cupboard, Pets at Sea and others. Under Design Manager Jodi Barozinsky, NB&D also oversaw external design firms from around the world, all of whom innovate and create the highest standards within the Royal Caribbean brands.

RTKL (Coral Gables, USA)

Founded in 1946, RTKL is a worldwide architecture, engineering, planning and creative services organization with more than 900 employees and 10 offices around the globe. The firm's portfolio spans the spectrum of hospitality design, from cruise ships, mountaintop ski resorts and spas to 1,500-room city hotels and comprehensive hotel evaluations and renovations. RTKL's 24 years of cruise ship design experience includes Royal Caribbean International's Freedom-class ships. Under Greg Walton, RTKL designed *Oasis of the Seas'* elegant, three-deck Opus main dining room, plus Casino Royale, the Conference Center, and lobbies, lifts and landings.

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Stephenjohn Design Ltd. (London, UK)

Created in 1989 as part of a hair, beauty and spa operating company (and later merging with the cruise ship focused firm Designteam), Stephenjohn Design has since been acclaimed for its award-winning designs of both land- and sea-based spa and fitness facilities. With Principle Designer John Picken at the forefront, the firm has been involved with Royal Caribbean since designing the Vision-class spas in the 1990s. For *Oasis of the Seas*, its designers have turned their experience towards creating the most spectacular spa and fitness facility afloat, including the spa's healthful Vitality Café.

Waterfield Design Group (Massachusetts, USA)

The Waterfield Design Group, Inc. is a landscape architecture and civil engineering firm with a portfolio that spans a wide range of unique landscape design and engineering solutions for public, private and institutional clients. Their experience includes entertainment venues, historic sites and educational facilities, as well as site planning for housing – from village planning and design, to private homes, to the renovation of public residential sites, playgrounds and streetscapes.

Wilson Butler Architects (Massachusetts, USA)

Led by partners Scott C. Wilson, AIA, and Scott Butler, AIA, Wilson Butler Architects is an architecture and interior design firm specializing in innovative, highly functioning architecture for entertainment and the arts, on land and sea. A Royal Caribbean design partner since 1999's *Voyager of the Seas*, for which they created the first onboard ice-skating rink, Wilson Butler Architects was selected to provide master planning for *Oasis of the Seas*. They have further left an indelible mark within Central Park (in consort with Atkins Global), and have led the innovative design work for the AquaTheater, Dazzles nightclub, Entertainment Place, Blaze nightclub, On Air Club, Opal Theater, Trellis Bar and other spaces.

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